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ABSTRACT

Methods classes in teacher education are under attack. If teacher education programs are to survive with a methods component, teacher educators need to begin living and demonstrating the models of pedagogy they advocate. Methods courses must go beyond the lecture mode to democratic practice in which students and instructors build social learning communities. This paper discusses establishing democratic practice in the classroom and the dilemmas inherent in such practice. Analysis of qualitative data from several classes resulted in a number of emergent themes: demystification of the knowledge base in methods classes, power of social learning/reduction of individualism, and decision making as a disappearing dialectic. The propositions which emerged in this study and the implications for curriculum can be summarized in one statement: the qualities and conditions which democratic practice allows--development of voice, the creation of learning environments, the pursuit of inquiry, and engagement in reflexivity--are the major components of a framework for learning and, therefore, should be major components of curriculum in teacher education. (Author/JD)

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Helping PRESERVICE Teachers Examine their Cultural and Educational Presuppositions: Strategies for Critical and Democratic Reflection

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HELPING PRESERVICE TEACHERS EXAMINE THEIR CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PRESUPPOSITIONS: STRATEGIES FOR CRITICAL AND DEMOCRATIC REFLECTION

Methods courses in teacher education programs have been maligned for some time (Lortie, 1975; Koehler, 1985; Smith, 1987). Variously attacked as unrealistic, simplistic, too theoretical or without theoretical base, courses with specific pedagogical content are under siege (Andrews, 1989a and 1989b; Beyer and Zeichner, 1982). Indeed, there has been a movement to eliminate teacher education programs in favor of strong liberal arts programs, focusing on content areas and student teaching components. If methods courses in teacher education programs are to be salvaged and imbued with new and useful life, teachers educators must be held accountable for actually living in their own classrooms the

pedagogical models they advocate. Substantive methods courses must become demonstrations of pedagogy and not merely discussions of pedagogy.

The curriculum structures which frame methods courses must move beyond lectures--the teaching mode which seeks to transmit knowledge--to the development of democratic social learning communities in which all participants view knowledge as contextually constructed. Methods courses must advocate active decision-making and critique rather than rote learning and compliance.

This paper describes an effort to demonstrate language and learning theory in a language arts/social studies methods course through development of democratic curriculum structures which build a social learning community in the classroom. First, we review the literature on democratic practice in teacher education. Second, we describe several of our course curriculum structures which highlighted democratic practice as sound learning theory. Third, we discuss the dilemmas inherent in trying to establish democratic practice with preservice teachers, specifically choice, decision-making, reflection and social learning communities. We will focus on categories of acceptance and rejection of our efforts to establish active social learning communities as the manifestation of democratic practice. Finally, we will discuss larger arena of problems teachers educators face in establishing democratic practice.

Establishing Democratic Practice

Teacher educators are just beginning to demonstrate in the college classroom the reflective and democratic practices currently being advocated for public schools. There are a number of strong impediments to establishment of this practice which can be viewed as concentric circles of barriers to change. The outer circle represents the larger thought forces which have dominated educational thinking in the twentieth century: the industrial society's values of efficiency, objectivity, individualism and standardization. These values show themselves in the the curriculum structures so wide-spread in the college classroom: transmission of knowledge through lectures and evaluation of knowledge through standardized testing.

The inner circles of barriers to change are represented by lack of understanding of democratic practice by teacher educators and students. These barriers are more specifically the focus of this paper. A review of the literature on democratic practice can help us to focus on opposing views of knowledge generation, on learning as individual or communal, and decision-making as central to democratic practice.

Knowledge: Transmitted or Constructed

Critical theorists view knowledge as a dialectic, socially constructed and open to change (Berlak and Berlak, 1981; Pinar and Grumet, 1976; Popkewitz, 1987). They view all knowledge as value laden. School knowledge, for example, reflects the views of the dominant culture. Critical theorists advocate using personal and

reflective knowledge of students to challenge school knowledge and in so doing, to create meaningful learning contexts. They suggest that educators must analyze the origins, purposes and mechanisms of schooling if schools are to serve society as a whole rather than serving the select dominant group.

The Carnegie (1986) and Holmes (1986) reports appear to gloss over the larger cultural and social contexts emphasized by critical theorists in favor of a focus on an apparently extant body of knowledge which can be transmitted. Holmes report authors write,

> While the determination of the origins, purposes, and mechanisms of schooling is vital, the heart of the matter is the structure of knowledge and what knowledge is of most worth (p. 51).

The "structure of knowledge" and the determination of "what knowledge is of most worth" must proceed from, not follow, an analysis of "the origins, purposes and mechanisms of schooling." It is our position that there is no objective, transmittable body of teaching knowledge separate from individual knowers who bring with them specific perspectives governed by position, race, class, sex and their place in the time, context, and setting in question. The biased nature of the value and production of knowledge toward the dominant cultural and economic group is evident in our history books which leave the story of women and minorities largely untold.

An excellent focus issue of Social Education (Nov./Dec., 1987) explores the proposed avenues for improvement and critiques these two reports. In his

introduction to this issue, Popkewitz summarizes the problems with these reports, the basis of which is the ahistorical nature of the documents. He feels that because there is no sustained philosophical, social, or political discussion of current educational problems, the proposals offered in these reports are contradictory and may serve only to perpetuate the status quo and actually contribute to increased bureaucratization and deskilling of the profession. For example, although more teacher autonomy and responsibility is recommended in these reports, Cornbleth (1987), in this same issue of Social Education, notes that the conception of teacher knowledge propounded in these reports is technocratic and procedural. This is a position antithetical to development of a kind of reflective teacher knowledge which promotes autonomy and responsibility. In addition to the ahistoricity of the documents, the scholarship appears to be one-sided. Popkewitz (1987) writes,

> Perhaps the most mystifying assumption in these reports is the assurance that there exists a consensus of research outlook. There are many kinds of school sciences, not just differences in procedures. Underlying our various research models are different fundamental assumptions about the nature of society and the character of individuality. To posit a consensus where there is none is to crystallize the work of science and to make our institutional arrangements seem amenable to improved efficiency, but not subject to structural scrutiny or redirection (p. 499).

In this and other examples offered in the critiques of these reports, we see that the lack of philosophical base, which would include discussion of the role and status of women and the nature of knowledge generation and lack of decision

making experience, weakens an otherwise well reasoned platform for reform.

Decision-Making: A Disappearing Dialectic

Two recent news items have reinforced our conviction that the erosion of decision-making as an active dialectic severely diminishes our capactiy to forge a more democratic soceity, in general. Item one: A former hostage who had been held for several years blindfolded and almost constantly in solitary confinement discussed his painful re-entry into freedom. What caught our attention were his comments on decision-making. He related that upon his return even the simplest decision, such as choosing what to eat or what to wear, caused him great anguish, so unaccustomed had he grown to making choices. Item two: In mid-September, 1990, a National Public Radio commentator interviewed school teachers from the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany). The teacher were in the process of making a transition from curriculum transmitted by rote memorization to one which required some active, creative thought on the part of students. The teachers reported that children were having great difficulty doing creative projects, and indeed, any project which required initiative and choice. I suspect that the teachers, too, experienced problems as they wrestled with including children in the choices and decision-making in the classroom.

The consequences of limited choice and desision-making have implications for classroom practice. Free thought and active, participatory decision-making are the foundations of democratic society. When citizens can no longer function

freely and make their voices heard then the dominant political and economic forces will dictate. If children and teachers become mere vehicles for transmission of a small segment of society's culture and values, then voices are silenced and society is diminished. A reconceptualized teacher education can become a vehicles for resistence to cultural, political and economic dominance by the privileged few.

Giroux & McClaren (1986), Sears (1985) and many others have called for development of this reconceptualized teacher education curriculum which emphasizes decision-making abilities, acquisition of social and survival skills, and the bridging of thought and labor (p. 38). Sears captures some of our own fears and thoughts on past experiences in teaching undergraduates when he says,

> Seldom are students--particularly working class, minority, and women students--provided with significant opportunities to develop their abilities in classrooms. Teacher are seldom willing to risk the chaos, uncertainty, and ambiguity that such development might entail . . . Lacking decision-making experiences, they [the students] have difficulties when decisions are expected . . . . (p. 39).

Some particularly revealing comments, germane to this issue, came from Kim, one of the preservice teachers in our classes, in a midsemester interview. We were discussing the course structure, how things might be better, and she began to talk about herself as a decision-maker. She said,

> You don't come out of the university as having to be a decision-maker.....I don't think I was ever forced to be a decision-maker. I just think that it was always laid out for me and someone said, "This is what you are supposed to be learning" and I didn't question what I

> was supposed to be learning. It's [the seminar] made me really want to do that [develop critical thinking and decision-making] for my kids when I teach because I know how difficult it's been for me and how frustrating it's been to think that I really can't even make a decision (interview, 10/30/87).

Kim found that the course structure and assignments demanded more of her in developing a stance and making decisions based on that stance than she had experienced in her other college courses. As Sears (1985) stated above, the structuring of curriculum such that these experiences are possible and available does require risk-taking and a tolerance for ambiguity on the part of instructors and students.

However, recent research in the areas of field experiences and methods courses, shows that most of them emphasize students' performance of specific methods and techniques such as managing the textbook program and maintaining order (J. Goodman, 1985; Zeichner, 1980). Goodman suggests that these experiences often lead to preservice teachers' passivity as they "learn how to merely fit into the conservative and established patterns of traditional school practice, rather than help future teachers to become more experimental, reflective, and active in their approach to education" (p. 109). He goes on to argue that although it is commonly accepted that universities offer a more substantive view of teaching (which is counteracted by field experiences), the fact is that universities tend to support those utilitarian perspectives (p. 111). Studies by Miller & Taylor (1984) and Zeichner (1980) corroborate Goodman's findings.

The advocates of democratic practice--informed, on-site curriculum planning (see Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984; Maher & Rathbone, 1987; Miller & Taylor, 1984; Smith, 1987; Newman, 1986)--recognize the tremendous untapped potential in the vision of women and children as capable decision makers. Efforts to realize this vision of teachers, especially preservice teachers, are scattered.

Learning: Individual or Communal

Views of how learning occurs can either stifle or support democratic practice. If learning is viewed as transmission of known objective facts, and learners viewed as empty vessels to be filled, then there is no opportunity for the kind of dialectic which would open to the floor to valuing of multiple cultures and beliefs systems within a classroom. The teachers voice will dominate. If on the other hand, learning is viewed as a constructive process in which many voices share experiences and perspectives and learners are viewed as bringing with them valuable ideas and thougths patterns to be interrogated and lifted up by a group process, then many voices will be heard. The opportunity for power sharing becomes evident as the knowledge base is constructed by the group.

Resistence to Democratic Practice

This study of acceptance and resistence to our curriculum structures is based on several assumptions about the impact of preservice teacher education. First, preservice teachers are not developing the kinds of generative relationships with peers, inservice teachers or professors which could foster critical awareness of

the challenges and responsibilities of teaching. Second, preservice teachers are not developing a sound theoretical base for curriculum decision-making. They are abdicating responsiblity for working through the intellectual and emotional challenges of developing on-site contextually sound curricula for themselves and their students. Third, they are not experiencing the power of on-site contextually based knowledge construction. In short, they are exchanging their autonomy and limiting their vision of schooling for the safety nets of preprogrammed materials and the status quo of traditional classroom operations. Obviously, the blame rests equally on teacher educators who have held the reins of power and have maintained status quo teaching methods.

A number of factors contribute to this current state of affairs. We will focus on three such factors. The first is socialization of teachers into a feminized profession; the second, the pull of prior beliefs; and the third, lack of demonstrations in the field.

Socialization of Teachers into a Feminized Profession

Research into the cultural and social picture of schooling alerts us to the phenomena of socialization of teachers into a feminized profession. Maher and Rathbone (1986) write,

> If women are generally socialized into passivity, reticence, and acceptance of external authorities, how can we best help female students in particular to chart a course toward an active personal

> autonomy in
> teaching? Establishing one's authority and finding one's voice--as a leader, organizer, and teacher--constitutes formidable tasks for any inexperienced teacher, especially in a culture that does not tend to take its young women (or its classroom teachers) very seriously (p.227).

Much of the recent research on women's behaviors, language, and conversational styles is an historical examination of schooling from female perspectives and indicates that classroom mangagement and instructional techniques still advocated may indeed rest on notions of male dominance rather than democratic, cooperative forms which promote sharing and mutual dependence (see Belenky, Clinchy, Tarule, & Goldberger 1986; Hale & Sandler, 1982; and Thorne & Henley, 1975).

The development of "democratic and cooperative" forms of classroom management and instruction suggests a redefining of roles and relationships among all curriculum stakeholders. The hierarchy which has formed with students on the bottom rung and administrators, researchers and state officials on the top must be dismantled in favor of school structures which allow all to assume roles of teacher, learner and researcher.

The Default Paradigm: The Pull of Prior Beliefs

A second factor which contributes to the maintainance of simplicity and safety-netting in the classroom is the pull on preservice and inservice teachers of prior beliefs. What do we do when we don't know what to do? We do what our

mothers or our third grade teachers did. As Lortie (1975), Cuban (1988) and others have indicated, students spend over 10,000 hours in largely traditional classrooms before entering teacher education programs. They already possess strong "default paradigms" for the conduct of teaching.

Unless there has been an opportunity to experience a lived through curriculum alternative to the status quo, it is very difficult to let go of this pull of prior beliefs particularly in the face of current evaluation systems and the immediate pressures and demands on beginnings teachers in the classroom. Unless preservice teachers are given the opportunity to work through and develop their own theoretical stance on what environments and curriculum structures best support learning, preprogrammed curricula will remain very attractive.

Demonstrations in the Field

What examples of challenging curriculum development are available to preservice teachers in the field? Some startling reports on classroom curriculum serve to make this point. Woodward (1985) reports that as much as 90% of public school classroom time in the area of social studies depends for structure and content on preprogrammed materials. A reading professor and senior author of a reading basal series at a major midwest university instructs his students that "99% of school systems use basal readers, so you'll have to use them." In his courses, no classroom time is given to the instruction in or encouragement of

independent curriculum development (interviews with students from the courses, 9/3/88).

It is understandable that Goodman (1985) and Zeichner (1980) can report that field experiences are likely to develop in preservice teachers a "conservative" tendancy, which may be translated, "program dependence." Indeed, as Cuban (1988) observes, little has changed over the last hundred years in the way we school children or train teachers despite the rhetoric of reform. Even in the rare instance of exciting classroom curriculum development, making the time spent in the classroom worthwhile is difficult. As Stone (1987) concludes in her review of field experience literature,

> Unfortunately, the extensive literature in this area of field experiences for preservice teachers contains little information on how to translate the time spent in classrooms into meaningful activities (p.372).

Although the vision of what teaching and learning has been limited by social and political forces, bright pockets of change alert us to the possiblities inherent in liberatory education based in some measure on new views of the roles of participants in educational settings, the type of research which supports change for both researcher and researched, and the conceptual and theoretical stances which redefine what it means to teach and to learn. As this redefining proceeds, teaching and inquiry become reciprocal and interdependent. A discussion of the nature of current innovative research efforts in teacher education highlights to varying degrees the reciprocity between teaching and research and the

possibilities for change that democratic practice offers.

Visionary Projects in Democratic Practice

Descriptions of what actually occurs in teacher education classrooms are rare (Koehler,1985). However, in their published works a number of teacher educators emphasize conceptual and theoretical matters in the preparation of teachers (Barnes, 1976; Bissex, 1986; Feiman, 1979; Goodman, 1985, 1986; Harste and Burke, 1983; Newman, 1988; Perl and Wilson, 1986; Zeichner and Liston, 1987). This group shares the perspective that teacher education should engage students in serious thought about the theoretical [either sociological and political perspectives or language and learning perspectives] underpinnings of curriculum and instruction so that they will be able to make informed judgments in the classroom.

Additionally, there have been some reports on the development of more substantive, empowering components of teacher education at the program level. For example, Zeichner and Liston (1987) argue that traditional approaches to student teaching inhibit self-directed growth of students teachers and fail to promote ongoing professional growth. They cite an example of a program which does provide for this ongoing professional growth. They describe an undergraduate education program in which students are encouraged to be reflective and to view classrooms as social laboratories for their own inquiry

rather than models for practice. In addition to providing a context for reflective teacher education the potential for inservice teacher growth is enhanced as this approach often results in some sort of collaboration between the inservice and preservice teachers. No in-depth reporting of this program has appeared in the literature.

Goodman (1986) studied methods courses in education in an attempt to begin filling this gap in the research and offering insights which will enable us to alter practice. His study calls into question the popular views of these methods courses. Perhaps the most interesting of these popular views is that methods courses are "too theoretical." Goodman found that "the vast majority of class discussions, course readings, and assignments had very direct application to classroom teaching" (p. 348). He concluded that preservice teachers do not internalize information given for "future use" which is not immediately implemented and assume later that the methods courses have been too theoretical. Katz, et al. (1981) call this the "feed forward problem," meaning that preservice education provides answers to questions which have yet to be asked.

In light of this problem, Goodman (1986b) makes several recommendations: 1) teacher educators must explore ways to raise substantive issues in methods courses that are directly related to students' experiences; 2) teacher educators need to be more fully involved in the creation of early field experiences that correspond to methods courses; 3) teacher educators must understand the

difficulty of substantive change within educational settings; students must learn the politics of teaching (p. 350).

Gitlin and Teitelbaum (1983) have also contributed to reform efforts in teacher education methods courses and have expanded our vision of the possiblities of schooling. They believe that an over-emphasis on traditional technical and managerial concerns tends to minimize the teachers preparedness for an active future role in the transformation of schools. They attempted to address this concern through an innovative approach. They describe a teacher education course in which prospective teachers use ethnographic methodology to examine school settings--"the taken-for-granted everyday life of schools"--and reflect upon the role of the teacher.

There are few reports in the literature on innovative course work or methods instruction in preservice reading or language arts methods courses. However, Brazee and Kristo (1986) discuss briefly the creation of a whole language classroom with preservice teachers. They present suggestions in the form of "episodes" and "reflections" in which students experienced a lived-through curriculum and reflected on their experiences.

An Approach to Democratic Teacher Education: Reflective Social Learning Communities

The vast majority of preservice teachers who enroll in our courses have had

12 to 16 years of conservative instructional experiences through which they have developed their cultural and educational perspectives. For example, most come from small rural schools where they have developed notions of learning as a transmitted non-critical phenomena. Few have been asked to reflect upon own educational and cultural understandings. How do we as teacher educators provide safe haven for students' exploration of their own and others' perspectives? How do we relinquish power and support the risk-taking behaviors which will helps students to find voice and meaningful individual action within the context of a developing social learning community? How do we help students learn to work together for the common good? This part of the paper examines our attempts to answer these questions. First, we will highlight the democratic ethos as the basis for knowledge construction. Second, we will discuss the dilemmas inherent in trying to establish democratic practice.

Democratic Curriculum Structures: A Pedagogy for Knowledge Construction

Traditionally, professors and their students have been corralled into classroom in the name of education, but they have seldom moved toward a dynamic social learning community based on democratic practice. Little thought has been given to the necessity of group generation of knowledge, of cooperation, of planning and group action.

David Lusted (quoted in Lather, 1990) defines pedagogy as "the

transformation of consciousness that takes place in the intersection of three agencies--the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they produce together (p.3)." Viewed in this light, pedagogy becomes a dialectical transformation in which the teacher's consciousness is also transformed. Teachers are no longer transmitters of knowledge to students, nor are they facilitators of knowledge development in students, but they now become learners, generating the knoweldge base with students.

Figure 1 shows our projected curriculum structure for the semester. We attempted to integrate language arts and social studies methods as we implemented an authoring cycle curriculum.

[insert Fig. 1 about here]

The course objectives were:

1. To familiarize students with learning theories and models of language learning and their instructional implications.

2. To provide opportunity for development and implementation of strategies which support functional, meaningful use of reading, writing, and other sign systems in the classroom.

3. To collect and discuss ideas for classroom organization, record-keeping, and environments which support a natural, integrated curriculum.

4. To integrate and extend appropriate commercial reading and writing materials into a personal reading and writing program which moves across the content areas such as social studies.

5. To respond to and discuss our own and others' personal reading and writing experiences through the authoring cycle.

6. To remind ourselves of the purpose of reading and writing: to learn.

The course calendar for the first half of the semester was detailed concerning the experiences and readings, but the experiences themselves were open-ended. For example, students kept learning logs of their reactions to course events and readings, and they worked at the laboratory school with children in an authoring cycle which provided the structure but not the content of the interactions between students and children.

Our initial attempts to establish more open-ended curriculum in which students were given choices and expected to make decisions were somewhat frustrating for both the students and ourselves. The students' interpretations were: the instructors are disorganized and the objectives are not clear even though I had done more planning and given a more detailed calendar than ever before. Our interpretations were: the students are inexperienced at making choices, afraid to make decisions and unwilling to take responsiblity for their own learning.

Students were frustrated at not being told exactly what to do in various situations. Their preconceived notions of what the teacher's role is in the classroom made them feel ill at ease in situations in which they were learning along with the children or in which we had not given explicit directions. They wanted to be in charge, "to teach," to be in control. They discovered that they did not know how to respond to children's writing and ideas other than to correct their mistakes. It seemed to us that they wanted

pat answers for pat classroom events--the kind which they associated with "real" teaching. More than half the students mentioned problems with structure in the course evaluations. A number of students felt that the instructors were responsible for remedying the lack of structure and suggestions such as those below abounded:

> The course needs to have more structure.
>
> I think the course should be planned better. The students should have some indication of what is expected of them and the assignments should be explained better.
>
> The course should be more organized.
>
> Slow down. Do less and spend more time on the things.
>
> The class needs to be better structured.
>
> Be more explicit in explaining assignments.

Another group of students began to take responsibility for carving out their own pieces of the curriculum and choosing assignments and forging ahead with their own agendas. Those students are reflected in the following quotes from course evaluations:

> I don't have any suggestions for improvement. I think that only through your experience with us can you change some things as you see fit.
>
> I tend to be too structured. I don't operate well under certain methods of teaching. I will try to be more open-minded.
>
> Perhaps could be a little more organized. However, I think I got used to it and it wasn't bad at all!

> I like the course because Dr. Andrews tried to get the students to open up to a view that is controversial. That is a tough job. I think the course taught me far more than language arts. It extended into teaching and life.
>
> The class was a little shaky at the beginning getting started, but then things fell into place. One thing you might want to explain more is the authoring cycle before ISU students go to the lab school to work on it with kids. It was a bit confusing the first time we did it. After we got used to it, it went well.
>
> In this class, I felt very comfortable because I knew that Dr. Andrews would be open to anything we would say. I feel that she really cares about her students.

Despite a number of positive comments, as we evaluated the first semester course, we were disheartened. We felt that our efforts had met with resistence and even hostility in some cases. Some students felt cheated, that somehow we were withholding valuable information and making them struggle for it. We felt that they were so dependent on predigested curriculum that they could not take any responsibility for their own learning.

By the time the second semester began, we were feeling somewhat defeated. We decided to work more on our own, refining our individual teaching rather than trying to integrate our courses. As I (Andrews) entered the classroom in January, I realized I needed to make some changes. The first day of class as I faced a new group of students, a curriculum metaphor occurred to me which I thought might serve us well

as we began.

I said, "Imagine that I have in front of the class two bicycles in little pieces--one bicycle in each box. I divide the class in half and give each group a box. The group on the right gets a detailed set of directions for putting the bicycle back together. The group on the left gets no directions. I say to the groups, "Reassemble your bicycles. You have one week of class time."

"Now who will reassemble their bicycle the fastest?" I ask.

"We will," chimes out the group with directions.

"Most likely correct," I respond.

"Now, two weeks later, I bring the bicycles back to class again in the boxes and in pieces. This time, neither group gets directions. Who will reassemble the bicycle the fastest?" I ask.

Little flashes of light visible only to me flicker around the room. The consensus is that the group who put the bike together without directions the first time could now do it faster.

"Yes," I respond wisely. "The first group knows directions. The second group knows bicycles." A long pause follows as the group waits with anticipation. I continue,

"This semester you will sometimes feel that you are trying to get your bicycle together without any directions. Keep at it. Don't be discouraged. Much of what is necessary for you to learn in your teacher travels can be intuited only in the doing and I cannot always prepare you for the journey ahead. If you have tried on new roles in the classroom, set your own learning goals, realized that the knowledge base is constructed within the learning community and decided your own questions, then you will be on your way to knowing the teaching and learning of language, rather than following the "how to" of a detailed, already mapped out curriculum for the language arts."

This metaphor seemed to set the stage for this group and to let them know that things might be different in this course. Additionally, three

major changes in the curriculum provided more support for students in taking risks and exploring during the second semester. First, I increased the level of social learning in the community by instituting learning teams. Students worked in teams or four or five on various course projects and discussions. Few of the students had worked in learning teams prior to this college course. Second, we began the semester with a reseach approach to the language arts curriculum. We began a research cycle much as they would use it with elementary school children. Third, I kept a process journal during the class team work in which I recorded comments, interactions and concrete examples of developing theory.

The results of these three changes were interesting. Through analyzing the data in student reflection journals and course evaluations, I was able to categorize the kinds of functions the learning teams, the research, and the process journal played in helping students to gain confidence, to make decisions, and recognize the evolution of the knowledge base in the course. Using the constant comparative method (Glaser and Straus, 1975) we sorted and unitized information as it was collected from reflection journals, interviews, daily class interactions of the students (N=42) and the instructor's process journal. Themes to be further explored in the teaching were highlighted and the following categories emerged: acknowledgement of the value of social learning, increased confidence and self esteem,

metacognitive awareness, teaching as facilitating vs. teaching as structuring, the synergy of group work: expansion of the knowledge base. I will highlight three facets of these of these categories.

Learning Teams: Building Community and Voice

Traditionally, the voice of the instructor is the privileged voice in the classroom. The students' voices are non-privileged. The learning teams provided setting for the development of "a-privileged" voice and knowledge construction. Student voices within the groups carried equal weight. The subject of the group conversations was informed by "outside" voices, such as the instructor or the text, but those outside voices did not become definitive in the knowledge construction nor did they overwhelm the content of the group interactions. This tendancy to minimize the teacher and text voices in favor of group construction of knowledge is exemplified in this quote from Kim,

> By working in this group, I have discovered a lot about the Middle Ages that I didn't know before now. Even though I have had many history classes, none of the information meant as much to me coming from the teacher's mouth as it did to me this week in the group work. Knowledge generated in groups works--it is accepted, but not privileged. Group members move ahead, consider input, but voices are less likely to be silenced OR privileged.

The Process Journal: Intersection of Student and Teacher Voices

As students worked in their learning teams, I adopted a strategy which I have come to call "transactional replays." I circulated in the classroom, jotting down notes on conversations and comments. When I had accumulated this "strategic talk" I began to note patterns of response, questions and points that students were making. At some point in the team work period, I read back to them the kinds of things I had noted in their talk and we categorized according to strategies, content, affective concerns, social learning effects and so on. We also began to ask theory questions of these notes and observations: how were they reading, what strategies were they using, what interesting tangents were revealed in their conversations about their readings and novels?

Some of our most powerful and theoretical discussions occurred as we attempted to demonstrate the social nature of learning and the variety of sources for knowledge construction. For example, we generated a list of "learnings for the week" from my classroom process journal and their reflection journals. We then discussed where each idea had come from and how it was generated. They began to see that the textbooks and the instructor of record were only two of many sources for knowledge construction. They were surprised to see how much of their developing

knowledge base had come from sources other than the textbooks and the instructor. My practice felt connected to my beliefs at this point and as I now analyze this phenomena, I see three major reasons for this connectedness: 1) we had begun to demystify the source of knowledge and view ourselves as knowledge generators; 2) more importantly, the issues and constructs had emerged from an actual learning context in which the students and I were involved; 3) I realized that I could trust the students to demonstrate for themselves much of the reading, writing and learning theory I had formerly lectured on. Our new roles, resulting from more democratic practice, allowed us to refocus and analyze the context and recognize our own strategies for learning and teaching.

My role now was to be an active mirror for their voices, helping them to bring their tacit understandings of the process to conscious awareness to be discussed and applied. These "transactional replays" gave me a way to focus the next class period and a way to share with students the insights I gained about their learning processes as I observed them. As a "human instrument" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I provided an intelligent sounding board which focused and reorganized the developing knowledge base through my own experiences and vision of the curriculum. This reflective process enabled us to see more clearly our instructional histories and ways of knowing as educators, our vision of the ideal and our process of

negotiating the current curriculum of this class.

A Research Cycle: Student Construction of the Knowledge Base

New views of learning surfaced as the community of learners evolved. Rather than viewing learning as sets of facts or principles to be memorized, students began to see that they themselves were developing knowledge bases within their groups through a group process. Their growing knowledge of learning theory in language education took concrete form as they read, wrote and discussed.

Following the first week of webbing current information on the topics of "Middle Ages" and "Family," students reflected on the insights and learnings for the week. Several students chose to discuss their feelings about the group work in relation to the new information on their topics. Two weeks later, as we began this research project with fourth graders, their insights about knowledge construction became evident. Kylie wrote,

> The first day of work on the semantic web exited the children. It made them realize they possessed a great amount of knowledge of the Middle Ages. I explained to them that none of us knew everything about the Middle Ages and grouping our knowledge taught us more. They thought this [webbing] was a pretty neat system. Before, I think they thought all the information must come from the teacher.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

We have argued that teacher education cannot continue to promote conservative, intellectually dependent attitudes in preservice teachers; that teacher education is not the transmission and practice of a series of techniques for instruction and management. Through the presentation and analysis of data from the social learning context of a language arts methods course, we have supported the argument that the foundations of democratic practice, language theory and collaborative inquiry serve to support curriculum development and inquiry in ways that traditional teaching cannot. The educational theory to which we subscribe determines the environments we plan and the curriculum structures we value.

The propositions which emerged in this study and the implications for curriculum can be summarized into one brief statement: the qualities and conditions which democratic practice allows--development of voice, the creation of learning environments, the pursuit of inquiry, and engagement in reflexivity--are the major components of a framework for learning and therefore should be major components of curriculum in teacher education. We join Bruce in his summary statement at midterm,

> I didn't always have a clear picture of our daily goals or even a clear picture of the was in which we were to achieve our objective. But I know even as I type this, that a blueprint wouldn't have worked. I think we learned a great deal about the struggle that is so much a part of education.

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